

Response to Amendment

Amendment received on 06/20/2008 is acknowledged and entered. Claims 1-29 have been canceled. Claims 30-33, 36, 37, 39-42 and 59 have been amended. New claims 60-64 have been added. Claims 30-64 are currently pending in the application.

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a personal interview with Applicant Mr. Charles E. Roos on Thursday, September 25, 2008.

The application has been amended as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Amendment to Specification of 04/23/2004; 06/14/2005; and 09/21/2005 have been denied because said amendments do not comply with 37 CFR 1.121

IN THE CLAIMS

1-64. (Canceled)

65. (New) A method for detecting power problems with a utility provider distribution system using a multifunction data port, the multifunction data port

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comprising a plurality of interfaces for connecting to a utility user's premises and a communication network, the method comprising:

a) installing the multifunction data port at the utility user's premises, the utility user's premises are connected to utility user's electric power lines and to the Internet, the multifunction data port comprising an embedded computer, a network interface, and a house interface;

b) configuring the computer to provide communication interface between the communication network and devices located within the utility user's premises;

b) using the computer for continuously obtaining power measurements including Voltage and current data on the utility user's electric power lines in real time;

c) storing the obtained power measurements in the computer;

d) using the computer to calculate the harmonic distortion data in the power line using fast Fourier analysis;

e) transmitting the calculated data from the computer to the utility provider via network interface;

f) based on the calculated data, determining whether the utility user is responsible for creating excessive electrical noise;

g) charging the user higher fees when it is determined that the utility user is responsible for creating the excessive electrical noise.

66. (New) The method as recited in claim 65, further comprising the step of configuring the computer to communicate at least one of utility usage, billing information, and payment information corresponding to the utility user over the communication network.

67. (New) The method as recited in claim 66, further comprising:
initiating a secured transaction from the multifunction data port;

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transmitting a multifunction data port serial number corresponding to the multifunction data port as part of the initiated secured transaction to a financial institution over the communications network;

associating the multifunction data port serial number with a unique initial key number;

verifying the identity of the multifunction data port.

68. (New) The method as recited in claim 65, further comprising the step of configuring the computer to display at least one of utility usage information, billing information, and payment information on a television located within said utility user's structure.

69. (New) The method as recited in claim 65, further comprising the step of configuring the computer to provide interactive access to digital information services over the communication network.

70. (New) The method as recited in claim 65, further comprising the step of configuring the computer to provide load management capability to the utility user.

71. (New) The method as recited in claim 65, further comprising the step of configuring said computer to provide load management capability to the utility provider.

72. (New) The method as recited in claim 65, further comprising the step of configuring the computer to provide an interface with peripheral computing devices located within the utility user's premises, whereby the computer and the peripheral computing devices operate as a personal computer.

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73. (New) The method as recited in claim 72, further comprising the step of configuring the computer to monitor television viewing of the utility user within the utility user's structure and to report information related to said television viewing over said communication network.

74. (New) The method as recited in claim 65, further comprising the step of configuring the computer to communicate a detection of at least one of a tampering of the multifunction data port, a power outage at the utility meter, and a power distribution problem over the communication network.

75. (New) The method as recited in claim 74, further comprising the step of

- (a) inputting data within the utility user's premises;
- (b) transmitting said data from within the user's premises to the multifunction data port connected between the communications network and the utility user's premises;
- (c) detecting whether any breaches in the multifunction data port have occurred;

and

- (a) transmitting the data from the multifunction data port to the utility provider only if no breaches are detected.

76. (New) The method as recited in claim 75, wherein the step of inputting data within a utility user's premises further comprises browsing the Internet.

77. (New) The method as recited in claim 75, wherein the step of inputting data within a utility user's premises further comprises telecommunication.

78. (New) The method as recited in claim 75, wherein the step of inputting data within a utility user's premises further comprises video communication.

79. (New) A multifunction data port for detecting power problems with a utility provider distribution system using a multifunction data port, comprising:

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a utility meter for measuring utility usage, the utility meter having a housing;
a computer located in the housing and coupled to said utility meter,
a network interface for connecting the computer to a communication network;
and

a house interface for connecting the computer to devices located internal to a utility user's premises, wherein the computer is configured to:

provide communication interface between the communication network and devices located within the utility user's premises;

continuously obtain power measurements including Voltage and current data on the utility user's electric power lines in real time;

store the obtained power measurements in the computer;

calculate harmonic distortion data in the power line using fast Fourier analysis;

transmit the calculated data from the computer to the utility provider via the network interface;

charge the user higher fees when it is determined that the utility user is responsible for creating excessive electrical noise.

80. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 79, wherein the computer is further configured to communicate at least one of utility usage, billing information, and payment information corresponding to the utility user over the communication network.

81. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 80, wherein the computer is further configured to:

initiate a secured transaction from the multifunction data port;

transmit a multifunction data port serial number corresponding to the multifunction data port as part of the initiated secured transaction to a financial institution over the communications network;

associate the multifunction data port serial number with a unique initial key number;

verify the identity of the multifunction data port.

82. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 79, wherein the computer is further configured to display at least one of utility usage information, billing information, and payment information on a television located within said utility user's structure.

83. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 79, wherein the computer is further configured to provide interactive access to digital information services over the communication network.

84. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 79, wherein the computer is further configured to provide load management capability to the utility user.

85. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 79, wherein the computer is further configured to provide load management capability to the utility provider.

86. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 79, wherein the computer is further configured to provide an interface with peripheral computing devices located within the utility user's premises, whereby the computer and the peripheral computing devices operate as a personal computer.

87. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 86, wherein the computer is further configured to monitor television viewing of the utility user within the utility user's structure and to report information related to said

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television viewing over said communication network.

88. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 79, wherein the computer is further configured to communicate a detection of at least one of a tampering of the multifunction data port, a power outage at the utility meter, and a power distribution problem over the communication network.

89. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 79, wherein the computer is further configured to the computer is further configured to:

- (a) input data within the utility user's premises;
 - (b) transmit the data from within the user's premises to the multifunction data port connected between the communications network and the utility user's premises;
 - (c) detect whether any breaches in the multifunction data port have occurred;
- and
- (a) transmit the data from the multifunction data port to the utility provider only if no breaches are detected.

90. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 89, wherein the computer is further configured to input data within the utility user's premises via browsing the Internet.

91. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 89, wherein the computer is further configured to input data within the utility user's premises via a means for telecommunication.

92. (New) The multifunction data port as recited in claim 89, wherein the computer is further configured to input data within the utility user's premises via a means for video communication.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 65-92 are allowed.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submission should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reason for Allowance".

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Igor Borissov whose telephone number is 571-272-6801. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John W. Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/Igor N. Borissov/

Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3628

09/25/2008